



# The Society for the Study of Social Problems

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November 7, 2014

To: The Honorable Eduardo Medina Mora, Ambassador of Mexico, Washington DC  
The Honorable Jorge Montaña, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, NYC  
The Honorable John F. Kerry, Secretary of State, US State Department, Washington, DC

On behalf of our national association of social practitioners and academic professionals, the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) hereby expresses its deep concern regarding the forced disappearance of 43 students of the “Raúl Isidro Burgo” Teachers College located in the rural town of Ayotzinapa in the Mexican State of Guerrero.

First and foremost, we join our voices with those being heard around the world with the fading hopes that each of the 43 students who were in training to become teachers in service of their rural communities in the State of Guerrero be returned alive and afforded the protection necessary to continue their studies. The SSSP wishes to express our deepest solidarity with the victims, the families of the victims, and all of their loved ones, including the six individuals who died in the course of the violent confrontation that ended with the disappearance of 43 others.

Second, we join the worldwide call for an exhaustive investigation of these criminal acts to be conducted in full accordance with international law. This very specifically means that the Federal Authorities of Mexico should accede to the call from Geneva by the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights who has repeatedly requested that Mexico recognize the competence of the UN Committee on Forced Disappearances as provided for in Article 31 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights Office in Mexico, Javier Hernandez, continues to request that the Federal Authorities recognize this case as one of forced disappearance and that his office stands ready to provide all of the technical expertise necessary to contribute to a full investigation. Proper investigation of this case will require highest standard forensic investigation and criminalistics with independent supervision that will enjoy the confidence of all Mexicans, including those whose confidence in their local, state and federal authorities has been questioned given the widespread reports of local corruption, impunity, infiltration of local authorities by criminal elements, and /or collaboration of police authorities in deplorable acts of violence against civilians. In the case of Ayotzinapa, the local mayor fled and went into hiding before being captured on November 4th in Mexico City and is now considered a suspect in the case.

Third, the SSSP remains extremely concerned with the heightened criminalization of protest and the alarming increase in violent acts, including forced disappearances, being perpetuated in Mexico that since 2012 have accelerated greatly, this according to reports from numerous credible sources such as the UN High Commissioner of

Human Rights in Geneva. The fact that Mexican federal authorities have since discovered mass graves in the area but with none of the bodies found being those of the missing student demonstrators offers prima facie evidence that numerous acts of violence have gone and continue to go uninvestigated.

To this end, we call on the Federal Authorities of Mexico to investigate and prosecute the actors and authors of the criminal forced disappearance of students at Ayotzinapa to the fullest extent of Mexican law and as obligatory under the international laws to which Mexico is signatory. Given the very particular character of forced disappearance which in contrast to kidnapping refers to the involvement of authorities in the criminal act, the SSSP is especially concerned about its documented pattern of occurrence in the context of protest, forming part of the overall armed violence being used by police and military forces against Mexican activists. While the human rights dimension of the murders and forced disappearances alone justify our condemnation, we need to be mindful that the continuing failure to protect the rights of Mexican citizens can seriously jeopardize the relations between the United States and Mexico, particularly with regard to the declining security of US citizens travelling to Mexico for tourism, study abroad or business. We also call on the US Department of State to reiterate its concern to the Federal Government of Mexico and to remind it of its obligations under international law.

Most sincerely,



Marlese Durr, Wright State University  
SSSP President, 2014-2015



Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.  
Executive Officer